

VZCZCXRO6925  
RR RUEHAG RUEHDA RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHLN RUEHLZ  
RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG  
DE RUEHPS #0256/01 0801812  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 211812Z MAR 06  
FM USOFFICE PRISTINA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5933  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 0910  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RHMFIUU/USNMR SHAPE BE//INTAF//  
RUFNPKD/USDOCO SOUTH NAPLES IT//INTAF//  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PRISTINA 000256

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/SCE, EUR/ACE, DRL, PRM, IO, NSC FOR BBRAUN,  
USUN, BUDAPEST FOR POSNER-MULLEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [EAID](#) [SENV](#) [PHUM](#) [UNMIK](#) [KDEM](#) [YI](#)

SUBJECT: KOSOVO: RECOMMENDATION ON TREATMENT OF ROMA LEAD  
POISONING

REF: 05 PRISTINA 1172

Sensitive but unclassified, please protect accordingly.

1. (SBU) SUMMARY. International community stakeholders have decided that Roma victims of lead poisoning can be safely treated at Osterode, UNMIK's temporary relocation facility. Notwithstanding the insistence of Roma leaders that their constituents will accept relocation only to their old Mitrovica neighborhood, destroyed by ethnic Albanians in 1999, ten Roma families took up residence at Osterode on March 20, after being forced out of their refugee camp by flooding and fire. Post recommends that SEED funding earmarked for treatment of Roma lead poisoning be released for use in constructing, supplying, and operating a convalescence center at Osterode or any other consensus venue. This is not a perfect solution in that we aren't certain the Roma will agree to treatment at Osterode and we have reservations about plans for the international community to deal directly with the technically illegal hospital in north Mitrovica run by E.O.-listed Milan Ivanovic. We recommend that the USG endorse the plan, nevertheless, as the option with the best potential for mitigating the health crisis faced by Roma children. See action request in paragraph 9. END SUMMARY.

INTERNATIONALS COMMUNITY AGREES ON OSTERODE  
-----

2. (SBU) USOP prevailed upon the major international organizations involved in the ongoing Roma lead poisoning situation in the Mitrovica vicinity -- World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, UNMIK, UNHCR -- to join us in a March 13 working session. Based on recommendations of lead abatement public health expert AmCit Barry Brooks, who recently visited the area from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), these organizations have agreed that victims of lead poisoning can be safely treated at a treatment/convalescence center planned for the former French KFOR base Osterode, already retrofitted to house refugees.

3. (SBU) UNMIK's Neville Fouche told poloff on March 20 that 55 Roma from ten families have appeared at Osterode in recent days. Most of these Roma are from the Kablar refugee camp, which had experienced severe flooding and sewage

contamination this winter and a fire on March 19. Others are from the Cesmin Lug camp. Fouche said Osterode is ready to house all 500-plus Roma living in lead-contaminated camps in the Mitrovica vicinity. Fouche and UNMIK are hopeful that other Roma will find their way to Osterode notwithstanding the insistence of Roma leaders that their constituents will relocate only to their old Mitrovica neighborhood (or "mahala"), which was completely destroyed in 1999 by ethnic Albanians who accused the Roma of collaboration with Serbian forces.

#### UNMIK NEGOTIATES WITH SERB LEADERSHIP

-----

¶4. (SBU) Recent WHO testing confirms that children living in the Roma camps have dangerously elevated blood lead levels. UNMIK has reached agreement with the Serbian Ministry of Health in Belgrade for treatment of the children. The ministry operates a hospital in north Mitrovica as one of several "parallel institutions," tolerated by UNMIK notwithstanding their lack of legal standing in Kosovo because they provide essential services to Kosovo Serbs. Treatment is to be administered on an in-patient basis for five days by ethnic Serb doctors to be trained in lead abatement techniques by a WHO-appointed AmCit doctor scheduled to arrive in Kosovo on March 27. The in-patient care would be followed by 14 days of outpatient care at Osterode.

¶5. (SBU) UNMIK Acting PDSRSG Nell Waring told poloffs and polFSN at the March 13 meeting that, in return for allowing the Roma to move to Osterode, Serb leadership received from UNMIK space in Osterode for what they call utility storage (trucks, essentially, whose maintenance, UNMIK says, would be

PRISTINA 00000256 002 OF 002

performed by the Roma), and access for Serb children to newly-built recreational/playground facilities. (NOTE. The Kosovo Serb leadership contends that Osterode, a former Yugoslavia military installation, belongs to Serbia and opposes any use of the camp not approved by Belgrade. END NOTE.)

¶6. (SBU) Rand Engel of the NGO Balkans Sunflowers told poloff on March 21 that six members of the north Mitrovica Kosovo Serb advisory council visited Kablar camp on March 20 and persuaded the families victimized by the fire to move to Osterode. Waring believes UNMIK's engagement with parallel political and health structures in the north is a "necessary political reality" to get a Roma population scared of violent Serb repercussions and distrustful of ethnic Albanian medical professionals to be effectively treated and moved to the far less contaminated environment of Osterode.

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT. Post's recommendation to address the acute lead contamination emergency in the three camps is to fund a convalescence center at Osterode. Placing the convalescence center in Osterode is not a perfect solution, and involving a parallel structure and an E.O.-listed hospital administrator raises obvious concerns, but the action plan indisputably addresses the health crisis in a context of what is medically, legally, and financially doable. END COMMENT.

¶8. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST. Post recommends that SEED funds earmarked for the Roma medical emergency be used to fund a convalescence center at Osterode. USG funding would be earmarked for reusable, movable equipment - beds, bedding, containers - and immediate needs such as food and the remainder of medicine not provided by WHO.

GOLDBERG